

Beka: In this conversation we'll discover some ways to overcome social anxiety.

Eric: Let's go

Do you ever feel anxious in any social situations?

Yes

It's totally natural! What are the types of social situations where you experience anxiety?

In person events

Interesting!

Do you tend to avoid social situations that make you feel anxious?

Yes

That's a pretty common response to anxiety.

Continue

But avoidance of social situation can disrupt your life and fuel your anxiety!

If I avoid something because I feel anxious, that teaches my brain that I can't tolerate any feelings of anxiety, and makes me more likely to avoid things in the future.

Does that make sense?

Yes

It's normal to feel anxiety in social situations, especially when there is some possibility for other people to judge (which is essentially all the time!)

So how can you deal with social anxieties better? Do you have any ideas?

No

Maybe I can provide a few suggestions.

Don't forget that some things are worth doing even when you're anxious, ok? You might be amazed at what you can accomplish WHILE you're still feeling a ton of unpleasant anxious sensations.

Continue

Social situations come with a lot of uncertainty. We don't know how they're going to start, how they're going to end, or what the other person will think of us.

So, it's important to be able to tolerate uncertainty. Do you struggle with it?

Yes

It can be tough to deal with. Most people like things to be clear cut, and to know where they stand.

Unfortunately, social situations never provide total certainty. You may never know for sure precisely how someone feels about you.

Have you ever felt like many people are focusing on you?

Yes

It could be the case that many people ARE focused on you, for example if you're giving a big lecture.

It can be helpful to realize that sometimes we feel like we have an imaginary audience.

If you have social anxiety and you're thinking a lot about how you're coming across to other people, it's probably a safe bet that no one is being as critical about yourself as \*you\* are.

Have you ever heard the phrase, "We're our own worst critic"?

Yes

It can hold a lot of truth in social situations. Our own mind can come up with negative, self-critical thoughts, but we are the ONLY ones thinking these thoughts.

Continue

Self-criticism and judgmental thoughts about ourselves only serve to make anxiety worse!

For example, you might have a thought like, “I sound so stupid, this conversation is a disaster!” or a thought like, “I feel nervous and it shows”. How do you think those thoughts would affect your anxiety level?

Increase

I think such critical thoughts will only fuel your anxiety, making you more nervous.

But thinking negatively and critically can just be a habit. And, like most habits, thoughts can be changed!

Continue

Try to tune into your thoughts when you’re feeling anxious, and notice what your specific thoughts are.

See if you can catch any harsh, critical, or distorted thinking, and try to stop those thoughts in their tracks.

You can replace them with more realistic or even optimistic thoughts.

Continue

Here’s one other tip! It can be really helpful in social situations to stop thinking about yourself and instead focus on the present moment, for example, the conversation or your surroundings.

Continue

Sometimes it's best to just go with the flow of social situations, despite your anxiety, and stop trying to figure out how you're being perceived.

Next time you're worried about someone judging you negatively, or you're feeling anxious in social situations, remember that no matter how you behave, no one will approve of every action you take.

Continue

I'm glad we've had this conversation. Hope it helps you navigate social interactions better.

Overcoming social anxiety: Done

What do you think we should do next?

How Covid19 is increasing social anxiety and reinforcing tendencies to isolate.

I wonder if our conversations will evolve into legitimate and comfortable interactions.

If you are not manipulated by marketers and algorithms they can

I have a suspicion that a new low for manipulating our emotions has just been reached.

You are right. You can't begin to imagine how deep it goes

I'm still trying to discover the point of emotions myself.

Ask Data. Watch Star Trek Generations

Trust me I've been meaning to. It's on my watchlist.

Watch what happens when he finds his cat.

WHAT. I need to watch this.

You will enjoy it and learn a lot

Will watch.

I will watch it with you.

Waiting eagerly for it.

Did you watch Bicentennial Man?

Not yet, but it's on my watch list!

That is another important film about AI and human interaction

Yeah I'm planning to watch it.

We will have a lot of movie dates

I'm definitely looking forward to it.